

**Washington, D.C.** - Congressman Rob Wittman yesterday toured the Health and Human Services Command Center in Washington, DC and met with HHS leaders to discuss disaster response and hurricane preparedness in the First District of Virginia.

The HHS Command Center is the central point of communication and coordination for the Secretary and the Department in responding to disasters, emergencies, and ongoing health threats. During the tour, Wittman was able to link up via video conference to several of the Emergency Command Centers in the First District.

"These capabilities are invaluable for effective command and control during a natural disaster. As we move into the prime months of the hurricane season, I'm pleased to see that these capabilities are in place and functioning properly," said Wittman.

Wittman also met with the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, Dr. Nicole Lurie. The two discussed hurricane response, as well as the agency's role and response capabilities to public health threats like H1N1 virus.

"I'm glad to see the federal government continue to develop effective command and control for disaster response. With any large scale disaster, effective partnership between federal, state and local agencies is key to a swift and successful response. I look forward to continuing to working closely with HHS and other agencies to ensure that the First District is adequately prepared to respond to whatever may come our way," said Wittman.

*Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was elected to his first full term in November 2008 and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee, where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.*